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Résumé de l'article

Cet article veut montrer que l'évolution des bars et des restaurants du Vieux-Québec s'articule à la structure sociale des quartiers du XX^e siècle. Aussi les bars et les restaurants reflètent-ils des contenus culturels distincts, selon les secteurs où ils se trouvent, se rattachant tantôt à la culture populaire, tantôt à la culture de l'élite.

THE EVOLUTION OF RESTAURANTS AND BARS IN VIEUX-QUÉBEC SINCE 1900

by

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the salient features of the evolution of restaurants and bars in Vieux-Québec since 1900. Their spatial distribution has led to the creation of three distinct sectors within the historic district. The paper also focuses on how two different cultures, popular culture and "elite culture", are identifiable in the way proprietors describe their establishments.

KEY WORDS: Restaurants, bars, historical city, popular culture, elite culture, Vieux-Québec, Québec City.

RÉSUMÉ

**Stephen GAZILLO : L'évolution des bars et des restaurants du
Vieux-Québec depuis le début du siècle**

Cet article veut montrer que l'évolution des bars et des restaurants du Vieux-Québec s'articule à la structure sociale des quartiers du XX^e siècle. Aussi les bars et les restaurants reflètent-ils des contenus culturels distincts, selon les secteurs où ils se trouvent, se rattachant tantôt à la culture populaire, tantôt à la culture de l'élite.

MOTS-CLÉS : Restaurants, bars, ville historique, culture populaire, culture de l'élite, Vieux-Québec, Ville de Québec.

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The purpose of this paper is to describe the salient features of the evolution of restaurants and bars in Vieux-Québec since 1900, and to examine how their spatial distribution has led to the creation of three distinct sectors within the historic district. The paper also focuses on how two distinctly different cultural influences are identifiable in the way proprietors describe their establishments. The material presented here is derived from the results of research conducted in the geography department at Laval University over the period 1977-79, part of which consisted of interviews with restaurant and bar owners then operating within the walls of the old city. The interviews were especially helpful in identifying different perceptions of Vieux-Québec, and are the basis for most of the findings discussed in the following pages.¹

It should be understood from the outset that the restaurant and bar business occupies an important place in the economy of Québec City, generating, if lodging facilities are included, roughly one-half of the revenues associated with the entire region's tourist industry.² However, the purpose of this paper is not to underscore the economic functions of Old Québec but rather, to scrutinize the impact of the restaurant and bar business on the cultural ambiance of one of North America's oldest cities.

VIEUX-QUÉBEC: A MULTI-FUNCTIONAL MILIEU

One could argue that the restaurant and bar industry is the most ubiquitous activity within Vieux-Québec today. As part of the ever-expanding tourist industry, it is the city's number one employer, a vast conduit for tax dollars to the provincial government, and an important service for tourists and residents. To anyone who has visited Old Québec, the presence of a phenomenal number of restaurants and bars is difficult to ignore. No matter where one turns, it seems, there appears a "brasserie", a smart restaurant, nightclub, outdoor café, or street bar.

Also what is striking is the fact that these establishments are positioned in and amongst significant landmarks, well-preserved 17th and 18th century houses, and sinewy streets reminiscent of medieval times. The impression that prevails is sometimes perplexing to a North American. Observers have called Vieux-Québec a "Disneyland", a "Sturbridge Village", a North American "Carcassonne", and a "circus midway". The image of the city encircled by the walls that once echoed to the gunshots of Generals Wolfe and Montcalm in the 18th century is mostly a function of an individual's imagination. What should be emphasized here is that Vieux-Québec is redolent with images that defy description.

The research of Andrée Gendreau (1976) has shown that Old Québec has universal appeal. The most obvious characteristics that charge its compelling environment are:

- 1) its natural beauty, derived from the physical landscape and splendour of its location;
- 2) its history, preserved through the restoration of many of the houses found there;
- 3) its role as a cultural symbol;
- 4) Its intense atmosphere borne of a combination of inter-related factors, including the presence of a residential population; a size and dimension well suited to the pedestrian; the presence of visitors at any given time, and hence a proliferation of leisure facilities, notably restaurants and bars.

Against this backdrop the restaurant and bar business inevitably assumes a less awesome position. Perhaps the real strength of Old Québec lies in the fact that it is a viable, multi-functional community. It does not close at five o'clock. Its inhabitants really live in centuries old grey stone houses. However the balance between residential services and tourist facilities has been disrupted in recent years and the fulcrum has clearly shifted in favour of the restaurant and bar business. An inexorable expansion of the tourist industry has taken place in the past twenty years, causing one chagrined resident to say emphatically of her parish where she has lived over 80 years: "It is no longer Notre-Dame of Vieux-Québec here, it is Notre-Dame of the brasserie!" This particular resident went on to describe kaleidoscopic changes that had taken place in her neighborhood since the turn of the century. Surprisingly, she was not only concerned with the fact that there were so many new establishments, but that they were different. As the conversation progressed, it became apparent that changes in typology of restaurants and bars were important in the evolution of the business, and that these typological changes paralleled overall transformations in Old Québec.

In particular, the development of the restaurant and bar business has come at the expense of losses in the amount of housing stock and other services due in part to conversions to these new activities. In 1977, the municipal government of Québec City and the provincial government joined forces and imposed a zoning law on residents and entrepreneurs of Vieux-Québec, presumably to prevent further encroachment of a flourishing industry of remaining residential areas. The problem of a conflict of interest between residents and entrepreneurs has perhaps been resolved by the zoning law, but what lingers are fundamental questions concerning some of the disparaging effects of an environment which now has a dangerously high concentration of restaurants and bars.

The delicate balance between the different elements that make Vieux-Québec a rather unique multi-functional historic milieu has clearly been threatened by what is now a surfeit of restaurants and bars. The dilemma is best expressed as a case of overexploitation. The high profitability of being located in the historic district hastened the expansion of the business and chased away those more vulnerable activities that are dependant on a substantial residential population. Flagrant examples exist of the muscle of the restaurant and bar business causing the expulsion of other services. In one recent case, the victim was the Old City's only cobbler, who was forced to relocate outside the sector because the owners of his building decided to expand their restaurant. Many proprietors in the historic district argue that the free market system should be allowed to take care of itself, that the law of what the market can absorb will prevent the industry from growing to the force of a Juggernaut. Meanwhile, it would appear that the limit to what the historic environment can tolerate without seeming too contrived has been reached.³

With this in mind, two questions serve as the focus of our interest. First, how has the restaurant and bar business evolved since the turn of the century? Second, how does the industry affect the atmosphere of present-day Old Québec?

THE RISE OF THE RESTAURANT AND BAR BUSINESS: INCREASE IN NUMBERS, GROWTH PATTERNS, AND TYPOLOGICAL CHANGES

Increase in numbers

A look at the increase in the number of restaurant and bars provides some basic parameters in an analysis of how the business evolved. In 1900, there were

only twelve establishments in the historic sector. By 1945, that figure had almost tripled, and by 1970, it had reached 59. The period 1970-79 witnessed, however, the most explosive growth period with over 20 establishments being added, bringing the total to 80 by November 1979.

What are the factors that have caused this skyrocketing growth? The most obvious one is the expansion of the tourist industry, greatly facilitated by the advent of the automobile in the early part of the century. By the 1930's, over 100 000 foreign registered cars were entering Québec each year. According to Raoul Blanchard (1935), Québec was averaging a half million visitors from June to September during the Great Depression. One million meals were served in Old Québec during the three months of June, July, and August, 1933 (Blanchard). After World War II, the number of tourists visiting Québec continued to climb, peaking in the fifties, sixties, and early seventies. Americans predominated among the visitors throughout this period. In the seventies, they constituted almost half of all tourists registered in the information bureau of Vieux-Québec (figure 1).

The correlation between the growth of the tourist industry and the expanding restaurant and bar business ca not be overemphasized, but there are other factors that made this growth possible, particularly after 1960. Demographic changes within the old sector, including a declining residential population, and a burgeoning concentration of elderly persons, occurred throughout the sixties and seventies. In 1960, the intra-muros population stood at roughly 10 000. By 1976, it had dropped to 3 600. The dramatic decline was spurred by the departure of Laval University, whose progressive transfer to the suburb of Sainte-Foy, was initiated in 1960. The void left by the loss of the university indirectly contributed to the expansion of the restaurant and bar business.

Another important contributing factor was the construction of a number of large shopping centers in nearby Lévis, Sainte-Foy, and the Lower Town of Québec City. These shopping "malls" had a devastating effect on commercial activities within Old Québec, such shopping centres as Place Laurier in Sainte-Foy being able to lure tourists as well as local residents. Vieux-Québec virtually fell apart in the sixties in terms of its ability to serve as anything other than a district with a promising future as a tourist centre, and an area to be exploited as such.

In 1964, Vieux-Québec was officially declared an historic district by the then newly created Québec Ministry of Cultural Affairs, and this eventually led to the restoration of a large number of historic buildings. To defray the costs of these projects, many of the first floors were, not surprisingly, converted to restaurants, bars or boutiques.

Growth patterns

The geographical space of development offers a second, easily observable feature in the expansion of the restaurant and bar business. As figure 2 demonstrates, the bulk of development has occurred along the two principal streets that enter and leave the Old City: rue Saint-Louis and rue Saint-Jean. The most interesting feature is that growth has occurred along the corridors having the heaviest concentration of pedestrians at any given time. By walking down rue Saint-Louis to rue Sainte-Anne, down the alley way of rue du Trésor, over to Buade, down Côte de la Fabrique, and finally onto rue Saint-Jean, one passes over two-thirds of all existing restaurants and bars in Vieux-Québec! Only in the past ten years has growth

Figure 1

TOURISTS VISITING VIEUX-QUÉBEC, 1974-1978
(Visitors registered at the tourist information center, rue d'Auteuil)

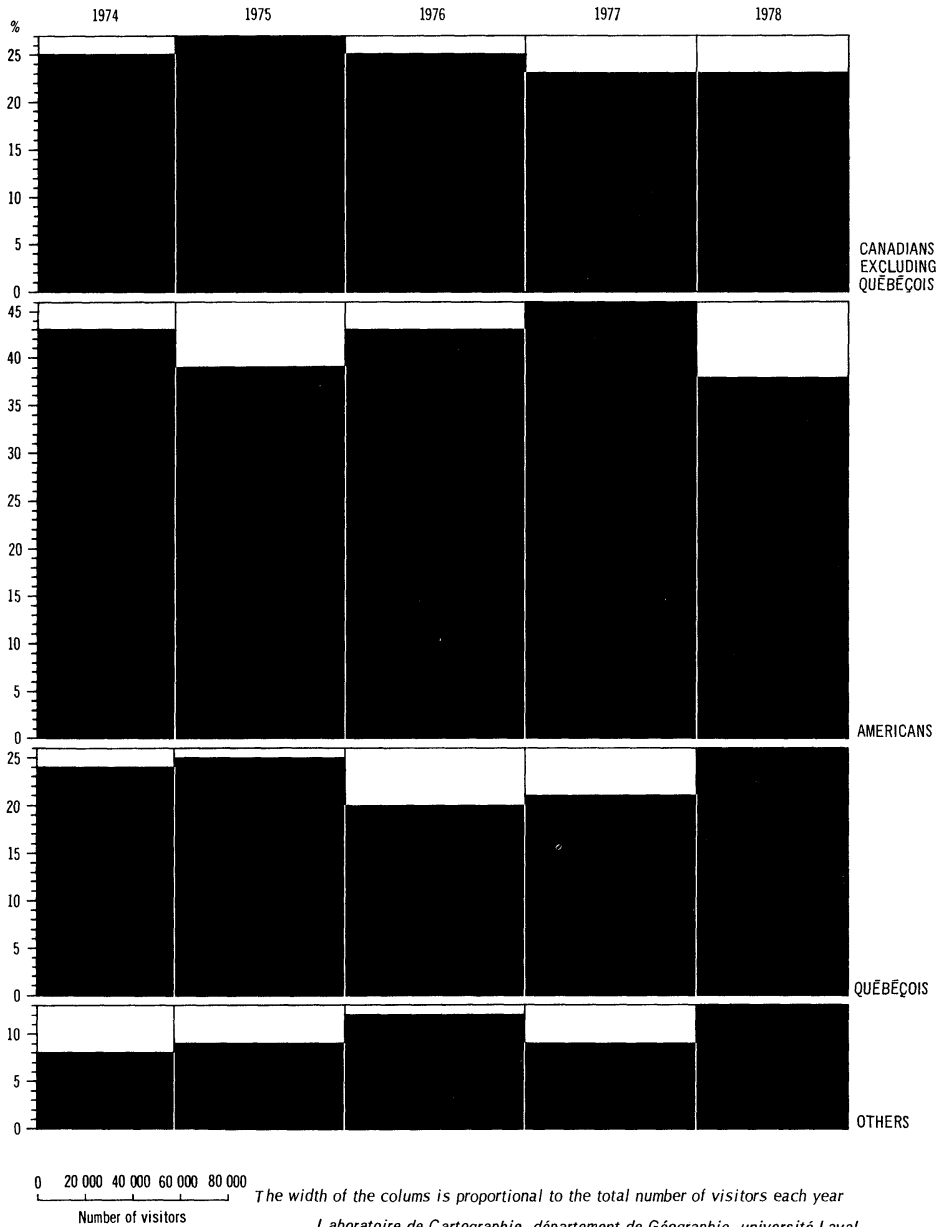
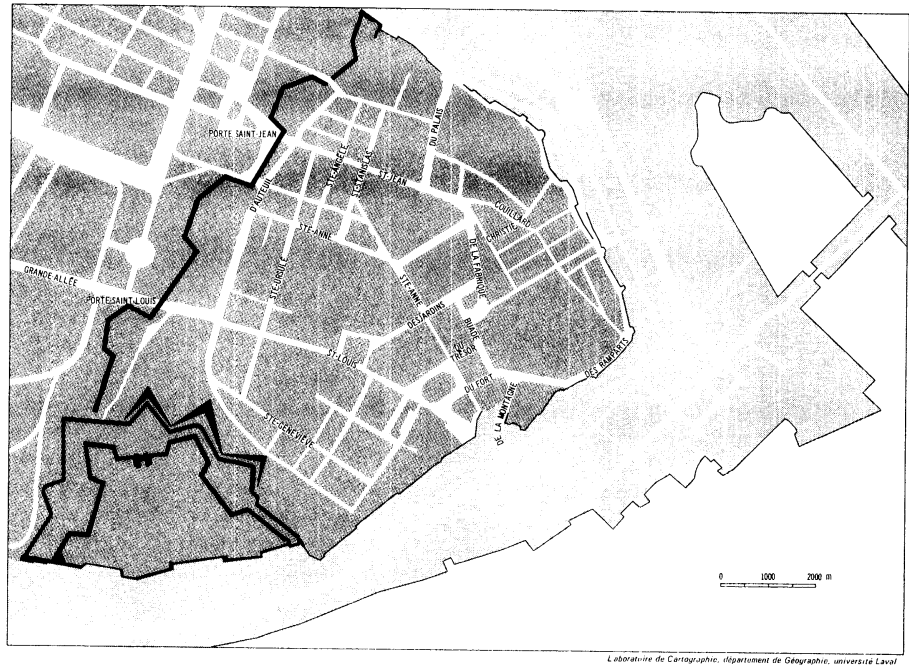
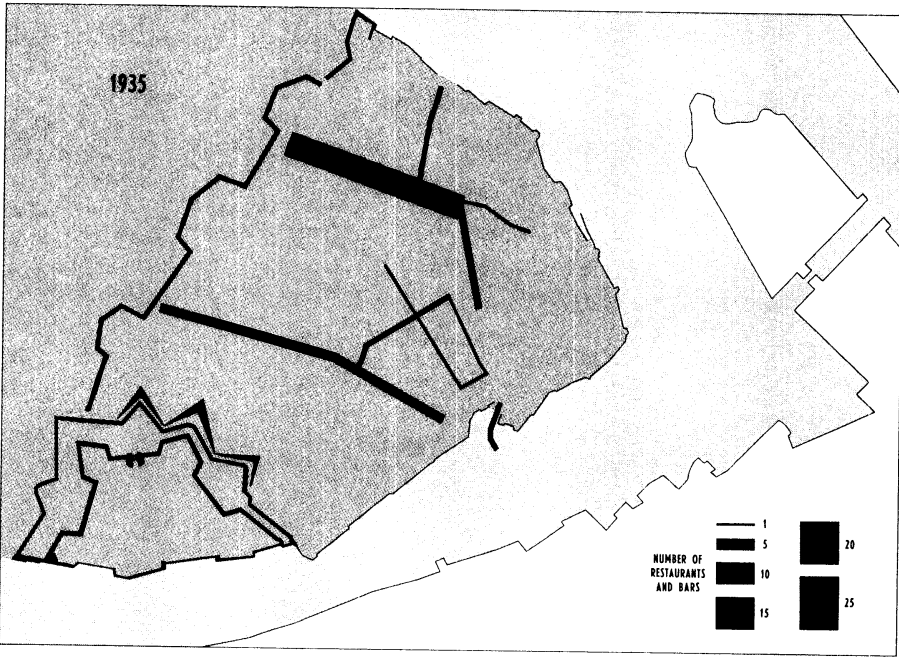
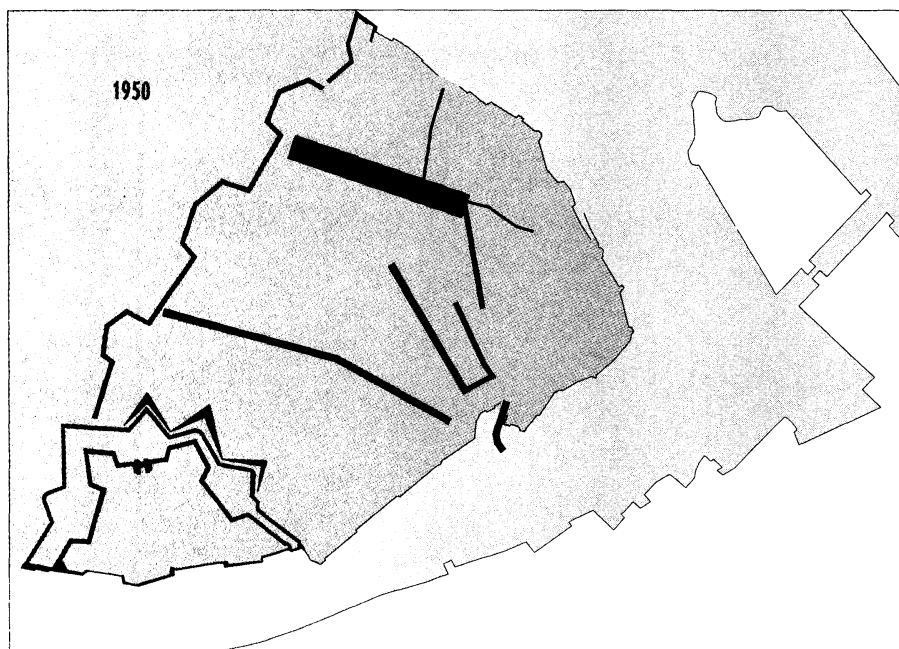
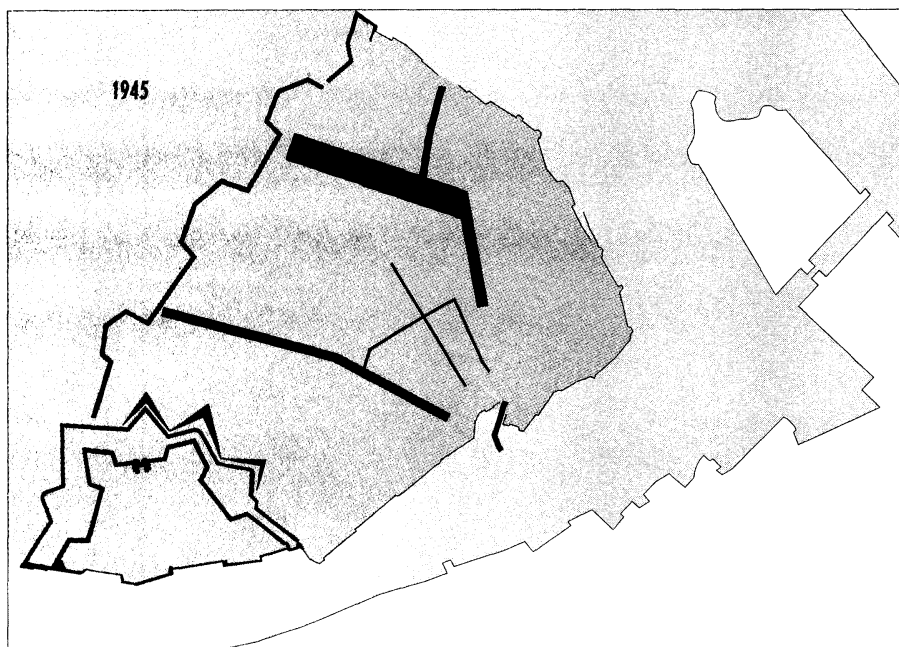


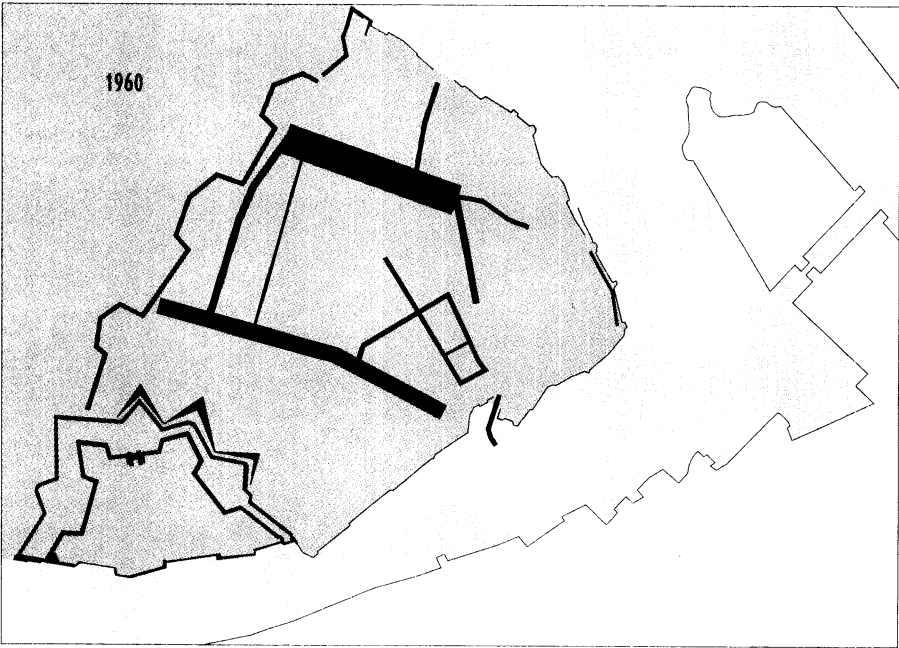
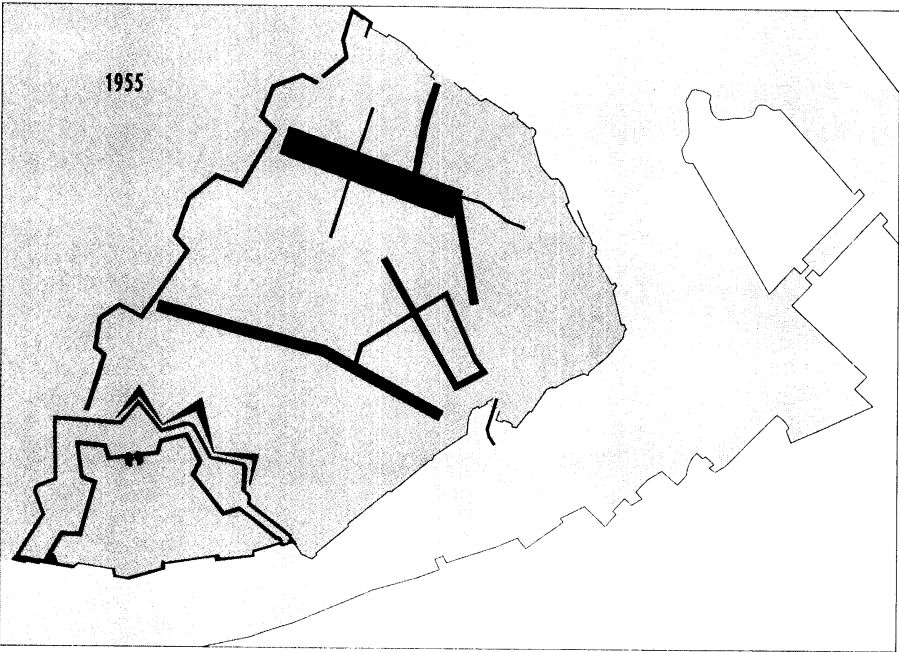
Figure 2
GROWTH PATTERN (BY STREETS) OF RESTAURANTS AND BARS
IN VIEUX-QUÉBEC, 1935-1979

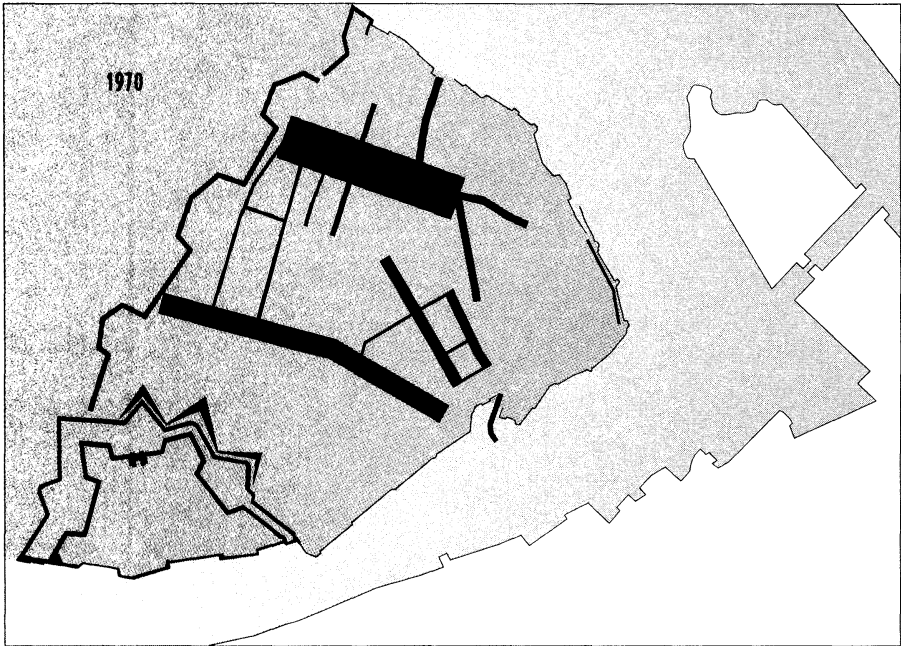
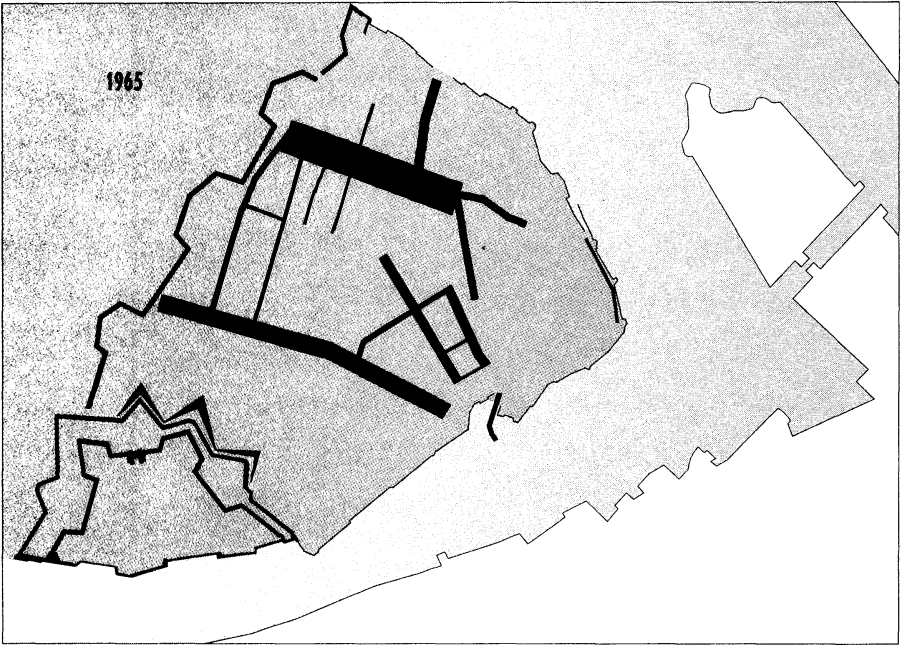


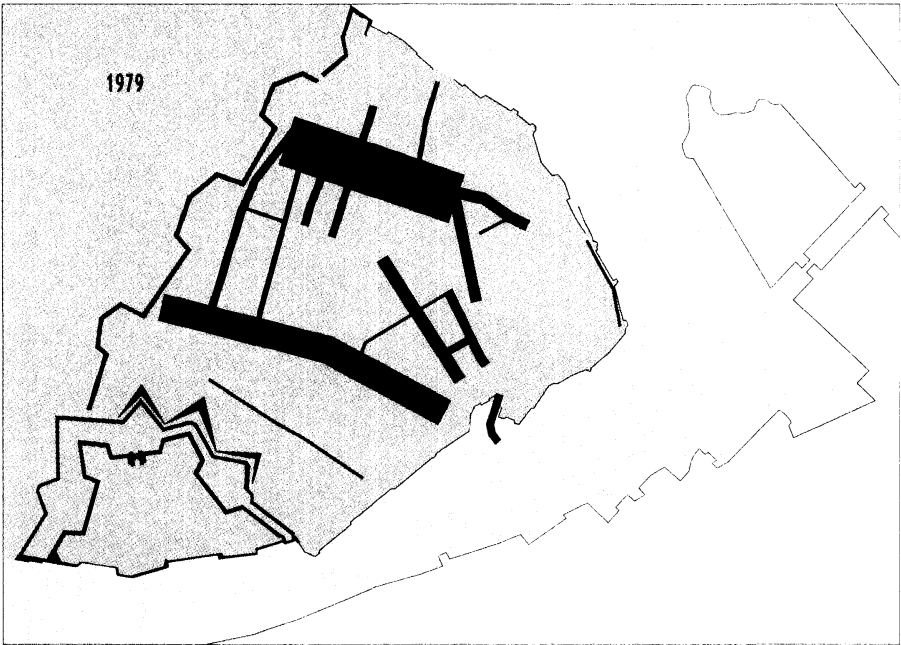
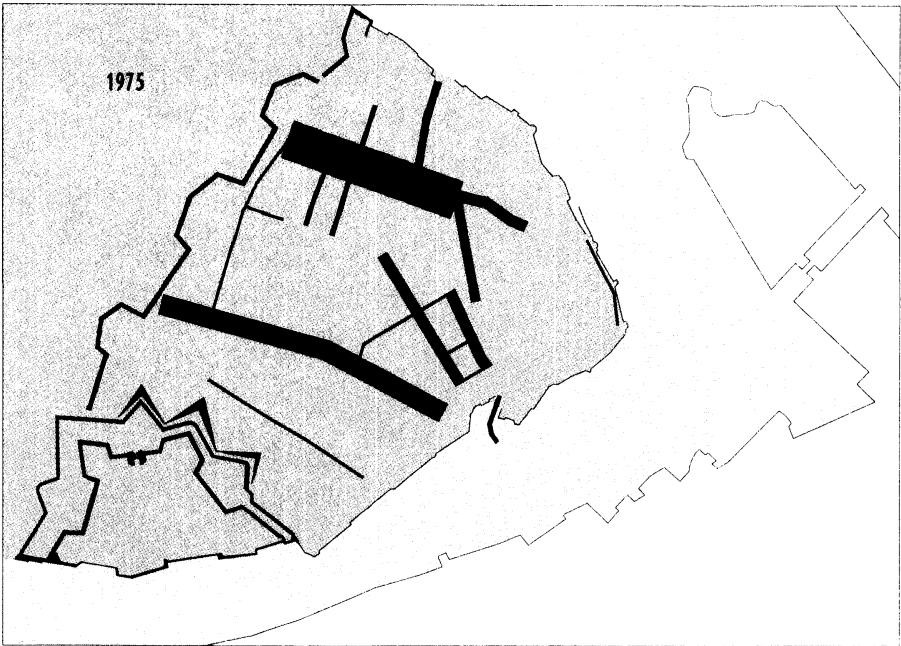
Laboratoire de Cartographie, département de Géographie, université Laval











of any importance taken place outside of these almost horseshoe-like corridors. This pattern of development, as we shall see, is particularly important in the shaping of "mini-sectors" within the historic district. It is a logical growth pattern because it parallels the paths of tourists and, as in other cities, those establishments that are away from the beaten track are generally oriented toward the local population.

Typological changes

There are many common misconceptions as to the history of Vieux-Québec as a "gastronomical" capital. Today's visitor is apt to think the Old City is privy to culinary miracles, where generations of chefs have developed recipes as landmarks as to the buildings they are operating in. The truth reveals that some traditions are all but lost, and that what many think is age-old vocation of wining and dining out, first actually appeared well after World War II.

Perhaps the most surprising fact is that only a handful of those restaurants and bars found in the historic district today were operating under the same name or ownership 20 years ago. Only 15 of the 43 establishments listed in the Marcotte Street Directory for Québec City in 1960 could be found under the same name or ownership in 1979. If you go back to 1955, the number drops to 11. Less than 20% of the restaurants and bars found in Old Québec today existed in their present form before 1960. After 1960 there was a vast influx of new owners bringing new concepts and ideas as to the types of services that should be offered.

The departure of the university is a symbolic watershed in the typological evolution of restaurants and bars in the old quarter. It led to the virtual disappearance of the now forgotten boarding house restaurants, which for years were the mainstay of many residents in the area adjacent to the university. By 1960, the once popular tea rooms had disappeared. These establishments had been the meeting place for tourists, especially Americans, during the summer months, and were characteristics of an epoch prior to the arrival of mass tourism.

The Québec Liquor Permit Control Commission Act of 1971 led to the creation of "brasseries", ending a long history of discrimination against women in the public taverns of Québec. The tavern had long been popular in Vieux-Québec, and while a few still exist today, these "for men only" establishments are slowly giving way in the face of changing social habits. By 1970, the outdoor café, known as the "café-terrasse", had been introduced to Old Québec. Though still a novelty in North America, the outdoor café is virtually a cultural institution in Europe. Their presence significantly changes the atmosphere of Vieux-Québec during the summer, not only by adding a starkly visible European dimension to the image of the city, but by making people more present in the landscape.

Although changes in North American eating habits during the fifties and sixties resulted in a proliferation of fast-food restaurants, only a few of these exist in Vieux-Québec today. The more ubiquitous ones like McDonald's have not been allowed to locate in the historic district, demonstrating efforts to preserve a sense of homogeneity in the historic landscape. At one time there was a "Howard Johnson's", but a public outcry led the owner to change the name if not the vocation. The attempt to preserve a façade that does not clash with the historic atmosphere of the quarter indicates a deep concern to preserve an image untainted by

alien intrusions upon the topography. Evidently, contemporary Vieux-Québec bears witness to a seemingly symbiotic relationship between "preservation" and "profit".

A look at the toponymy of restaurants and bars reveals that what seems gratuitous today, the omnipresence of French names, is a surprisingly recent phenomenon. Before 1960, a plethora of establishments bearing English names could be found in the quarter. In 1945, more than half of them had English names. Typical were the *Manhattan Cafe*, *Blue Bird Coffee Shop*, *Galaxy Restaurant*, and *Great Britain Restaurant*. It was only after 1960 that sweeping changes took place in the toponymy, reflecting the movement in Québec Province known as "la révolution tranquille".⁴ This led to the almost complete frenchification of the old quarter.

Along the same lines, the revered "continental cuisine," now closely associated with the image of dining in Vieux-Québec, did not arrive at a level accessible to the general public until after World War II. The watershed for this type of cuisine was Montreal's Expo '67, when a variety of European products, such as "expresso" coffee, french cheeses, wine, etc., were introduced to the North American palate on a mass-scale.

In essence, the typological changes that took place and are still underway, causing the death of some traditions and the birth of others, are the product of a series of social, political, and cultural changes that include:

- 1) social changes in the micro-milieu as a result of a declining residential population and the withdrawal of many attendant services;
- 2) the political awakening of Québec Province during the sixties and seventies, resulting among other things in an affirmation of the French language and culture;
- 3) the penetration of other European cultures after World War II, facilitated by improved international communications and the inflow of new migrants.

THE THREE ZONES OF CONVERGENCE IN VIEUX-QUÉBEC

Three major restaurant and bar areas can be distinguished in Vieux-Québec (figure 3). Earlier, we referred to them as "mini-sectors". They correspond in large measure to the pattern of development along the pedestrian axes and principal transportation arteries entering and leaving the historic district. The typology of establishments helps us to make these distinctions, as do the observable differences in architecture and the types of clientele frequenting the various restaurants and bars within each sector.

The three areas are:

- 1) rue Saint-Jean, including parts of several streets that adjoin it;
- 2) rue Saint-Louis, including the Château Frontenac, one of the city's largest and most famous hôtels.
- 3) the central area of Vieux-Québec, comprising a good portion of rue Sainte-Anne, Buade, rue du Trésor, and Côte de la Fabrique.

If we examine the spatial distribution of restaurants and bars (figure 4), it is apparent that the vast majority of establishments fall within these three sectors, each being characterized by concentrations of particular types. There are historical differences between the three sectors. Rue Saint-Jean, in addition to its predom-

THE MAJOR RESTAURANT AND BAR AREAS IN VIEUX-QUÉBEC (INTRA-MUROS)

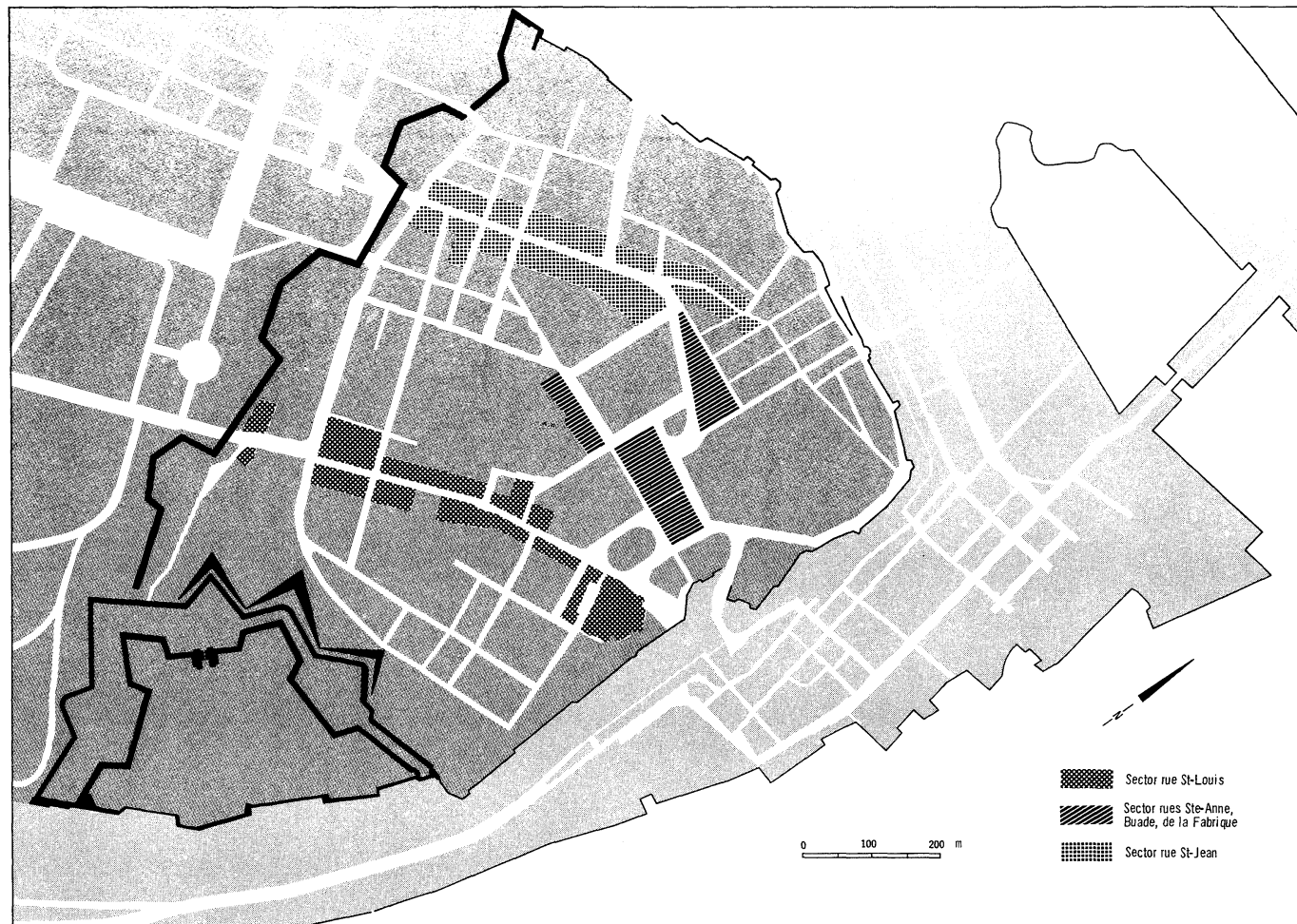


Figure 3

THE EVOLUTION OF RESTAURANTS AND BARS IN VIEUX-QUÉBEC SINCE 1900

Figure 4



inantly commercial function, once housed the least affluent residents of Vieux-Québec, whereas the Saint-Louis sector was more closely associated with an elite bourgeois population. The differences are compounded by the physical landscape of Vieux-Québec, which slopes upward in a north/south direction. Rue Saint-Louis is located near the highest area of the Old City, with rue Saint-Jean almost in a basement with respect to it. The central area acts as the link between the other two sectors.

Ironically, the physical differences correspond to Québec City proper, which is divided geographically and sociologically into the Upper and Lower Town. The social demography of the city is such that the Upper Town is characteristically the residence of Québec's elite, sometimes called "la haute gomme" (in English, the "upper crust"), and the Lower Town is the residence of the working class. Gendreau (1976) points out a similar distinction within Vieux-Québec, which she says can be divided into "Upper-upper Town," referring to the area around rue Saint-Louis and "Lower-upper Town," which includes rue Saint-Jean.

The rue Saint-Jean area contains the highest concentration of bars, nightclubs, and cafés, as is evidenced in figure 4. There are almost no lodging facilities for tourists located there. The Saint-Louis sector, as the map shows, has a higher concentration of lodging facilities, few "bars", and more establishments classified as simply restaurants. The central area of Vieux-Québec, located primarily around the Place d'Armes, is a mix of restaurants, bars, and boutiques. Because of its location, it attracts the most diverse types of clientele, although not always the highest concentrations. Architecturally, it is a kind of zone of transition, lacking the uniformity of Saint-Louis, yet less commercial than rue Saint-Jean.

The atmosphere within each sector clearly differs. The reputation of rue Saint-Jean has reached folkloric dimensions. It has traditionally been, in a way not unlike California's "hot rod" boulevards, Vieux-Québec's "strip", the place to see and be seen for thousands of people, young and old, from the Québec region. Québécois dominate this sector of the Old City. Rue Saint-Louis, with its restaurants looking almost like the set of a Hollywood movie, is a stark contrast. In season, it is the tourist who is most visible here. It is in the central sector of Vieux-Québec, where the anglo-tourist and the Québécois constantly rub elbows with each other, and where the atmosphere, in spite of monumental structures like the Basilique de Notre-Dame, the nearby Séminaire, and the picturesque "rue du Trésor" evoking a compact Montmartre, is perhaps most international. It could be that we find in this sector what North American cities aspire to be: a convergence of cultures visible in the people and the landscape, and a diversity of leisure facilities and services all compressed into a few blocks.

Just as the working world of rue Saint-Jean marches into Vieux-Québec, spilling over into many of its bars and onto the streets, so the recreational world of tourists flows through the Porte Saint-Louis from la Grande Allée, historically one of Québec City's most prestigious streets. And it is in the central area of Vieux-Québec that these worlds meet, to become a miniature, a crossroads of the West, through the converging of primarily European and North American traditions. The formation of these three sectors is highly dependent on movement outside establishments, and on the proximity of lodging facilities for tourists. Once inside a restaurant or bar, a different phenomenon takes place.

THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF QUÉBEC CITY TRANSLATED THROUGH VIEUX-QUÉBEC'S RESTAURANT AND BARS

A day or night of hopping from one restaurant or bar to the next in Vieux-Québec is like going through a hierarchy of socially different atmospheres and distinguishable clienteles, as if each restaurant and bar is the expression of a particular occupational group or social class. In many cases, as the clock ticks away the hours, the types of clientele and sometimes even the function of an establishment is transformed.

From the 26 restaurant/bar owners within Vieux-Québec who were asked to describe the type of clientele they attract came the almost unanimous reply, "all kinds." In retrospect, such an answer is to be expected, given the economic implications of the question and the competitive nature of the business. Yet, although empirical proof is difficult to obtain, descriptive analysis based on observations, coupled with answers from owners, lend credence to the theory that the restaurants and bars of Vieux-Québec, taken individually, recreate the social divisions that exist among the different classes and occupations of people in Québec City. Tourism notwithstanding, the social structure and vocation of Québec is expressed through the atmosphere and clientele of Vieux-Québec's establishments.

This occurs in the sense that we can find different groups sequestered in a number of establishments according to political affiliation, occupation, stage in the life cycle, and of course, purchasing power and social status. As the employees within the Québec government who work in the nearby government complex of high rise buildings and bunker-like structures move up the professional ladder, so they move through the restaurants and bars of Vieux-Québec! In the opinion of one bar owner, the younger one just beginning frequent places along rue Saint-Jean, and as they improve their status, they move slowly towards the establishments of rue Saint-Louis and la Grande Allée. Those who frequent Vieux-Québec know where to find their friends. For artists and poets, certain bars on rue Saint-Jean are a second home. For students in the local C.E.G.E.P.'s, certain brasseries are popular, while for journalists a restaurant off rue Saint-Jean serves as a popular haunt. Looked at through a 24-hour cycle, we discover that many establishments have a Jekyll and Hyde depending on whether it is day or night. A small unobtrusive little café-restaurant on Couillard street, packed with government employees at noontime, after eight becomes a smoke-filled, noisy jazz and folk club, where a white shirt and tie is an anomaly amongst the jean-clad clientele.

Perhaps the most significant finding of our research is that distinct cultural influences characterize the establishments of rue Saint-Jean and rue Saint-Louis. When proprietors from each street were asked, "what characterizes your establishment?", a clear dichotomy in responses resulted. Those operating on rue Saint-Jean responded with such answers as: "it's a street bar;" "it's a bar full of people from the neighborhood;" "you can meet anyone and everyone here;" "the atmosphere here results from the fact that customers know each other;" and, "our purpose is to bring back the atmosphere of Vieux-Québec in the fifties, when students and artists mingled with each other in the quarter." On the other hand, those from rue Saint-Louis gave such answers as: "the stone walls characterize my establishment;" "the fact that it's (the restaurant) in a historic house;" "the historic 'cachet' coupled with the fact that people can live something of the past here;" "people discover the Victorian style here;" and, "we've carried out extensive resto-

ration here." In other words the respondents from rue Saint-Jean emphasize the importance of people and a sense of community or neighborhood. In short, they characterize their establishment more through the clientele they are trying to attract than any other factor. For those who operate on rue Saint-Louis, the situation is clearly different. It is the physical structure, the fastidious restorations and a sense of historic pageantry that combine to turn each establishment into a slice of history.

The distinction between the two streets can be carried much further. Rue Saint-Jean is like a page out of the folksongs of one of Québec's great poets, Gilles Vigneault. It is symbolic of Québec's "culture populaire"; it is for everyman without distinction of race, class, color, or creed, but it is also clearly born out of the traditional culture of the Québécois workers, the men and women who once worked in the fields and then in the factories and whose diversion on a Friday or Saturday night was and still is in many cases a promenade down la rue Saint-Jean. Across the way, and up the hill, rue Saint-Louis stands in stark contrast. It is representative of an "elite culture," not in a pejorative sense, but in a way that is perhaps intangible or unbecoming to those who frequent the restaurant and bars of rue Saint-Jean. Essentially, the two streets differ in much the same way as 1st class and 2nd class seats on a train in France differ, with a single, important, exception. It is the image of rue Saint-Louis that is sold to tourists; the stone walls, Victorian houses, extensive restorations, exquisite cuisine, propriety, and all that is redolent of history—this is the essence of rue Saint-Louis and its establishments.

This dichotomy between popular and elite culture that we see reflected in the different atmospheres of rue Saint-Jean and rue Saint-Louis has grown out of the social fabric of Québec City. Each street, in an almost straight linear progression, is a geographical extension of the world that it has come to be symbolic of. In all of this, the presence of tourists serves to mitigate the differences between the two worlds. The notion of profits to be added from tourism does not elude either group of proprietors, although those operating on rue Saint-Louis are clearly favored by the proximity of lodging facilities for tourists.

CONCLUSION

The findings presented here clearly suggest that the future of Vieux-Québec is now intimately bound to the continued evolution of its restaurants and bars. It can be concluded that Vieux-Québec's restaurants and bars are like a window on Québec society and culture: they display the many different ways the people of Québec choose to distinguish themselves through entertainment. Hence, in spite of the vast changes in and phenomenal growth of the restaurant and bar industry in Vieux-Québec, those engaged in it are clearly influenced and conditioned by the historic and social fabric of the area.

NOTES

¹ The paper is derived from the author's master's thesis entitled, "Exploiting the images of Vieux-Québec," presented to the Geography Department of Laval University, November, 1979. The author wishes to thank Professor Marcel Bélanger for helpful suggestions intended to improve the presentation of the paper.

² In 1970, it was reported that Old Québec generated 40% of the entire revenues related to tourism for the Administrative Region 03 of Québec Province. Restaurant, bar, and lodging

facility expenditures by tourists accounted for 7,9\$ million in Vieux-Québec alone; this is roughly 20% of the 40\$ million expended in the entire region for tourist related items. Source: LE COMITÉ DE RÉNOVATION ET DE MISE EN VALEUR DU VIEUX-QUÉBEC, *Concept général de réaménagement du Vieux-Québec*. Québec, août 1970.

³In the author's thesis, the conflict between residents and entrepreneurs is expounded upon at greater length. Suffice it to say here that the imbalance created by the loss of services to residents reflects a conflict between "market place ethics," and ethics involving, notably social, cultural, aesthetic, and historic considerations.

⁴The period of the sixties in Québec is commonly referred to as the "Quiet Revolution." It saw sweeping changes in the role of Québec as a French-speaking province. Among the changes ushered in were creation of a new public school system, nationalization of electricity, and perhaps the creation of a Ministry of Cultural Affairs. The period reached its apogee with the visit of Charles De Gaulle, whose famed "vive le Québec libre!" still echoes across the world.

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GABOURY, "au fil des événements", 13 août 1981